

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

LITTLE SMOKY MINES

Number 559

1980

After John Stanley's prospectors found gold around Atlanta in 1864, another expedition set out the next April to check out his modest gold discoveries in Stanley Basin. Of all the mineral country this group examined, Little Smoky eventually proved the most important. Heading from Boise up past the South Boise mines to the upper south fork of the Boise River, these prospectors met with at least limited success on Little Smoky Creek before crossing north into Stanley Basin in pursuit of other excitements. Eventually the expedition's leader returned to Little Smoky at the time of the rush to Wood River. In the meantime extremely small scale, yet successful placering had gone on there since 1873. Finally quartz discoveries in 1879 led to development of a district that produced enough in 1886 to cover \$15,000 to \$25,000 in operating costs, pay for a \$15,000 concentrator, and provide \$30,000 in dividends. Late in 1886, Salt Lake investors purchased a major group of Little Smoky lode properties for \$105,000 in cash.

Eventually these lodes were credited with \$1,200,000 production. Gold accounted for about \$200,000 of that amount.

Little Smoky placers continued on a modest scale as well. Newton Rives, who came to Idaho in 1861, worked his claims there all by himself for more than two decades after 1873. Chinese miners purchased some Little Smoky claims in 1895, expanding placer operations there. But none of these compared with the lode mining there. Production was increased in 1980 with reprocessing of old dumps at Carrietown.

Publications--450 N. 4th Street, Boise, ID 83702--208-334-3428